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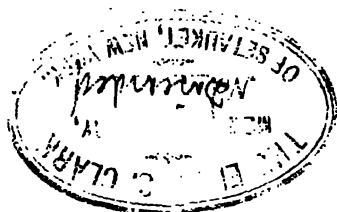
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YOUR LITTLE
BROTHER JAMES

CAROLINE H. PEMBERTON



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"You take this and hock it."

—Frontispiece.

YOUR LITTLE BROTHER JAMES.

BY

CAROLINE H. PEMBERTON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

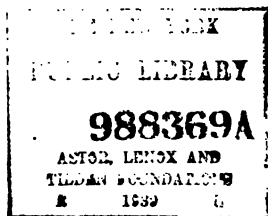
H. CLAY TRUMBULL,

Editor of the Sunday-School Times.

PHILADELPHIA :
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1896.

F. E. E



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TO
CORNELIA HANCOCK
AND
MARY A. EPPELSHEIMER,
WHO LOVED AND SERVED THE HERO OF THIS
STORY.

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"The character of every child is the joint result of environment and heredity. Of the two, the only one under our control and for which we are responsible, is environment."

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book is a narrative of facts. It is an impressive story, admirably told. The lessons of it are important on many accounts.

It shows that mothers do not always have motherly love or motherly fidelity, and that children are sufferers in consequence. It gives a glimpse of a large class of outcast children in our great cities neglected and wronged by those who should be their protectors.

It shows that such children are often led to believe, and that many believe of them, that they are hopelessly under the curse of their parents' misdoing. Misunderstood

science and perverted Christianity have combined to induce the belief that not only is there a real sense in which the children feel the evil influence of the sins of their parents, but that in all things the children's teeth must be set on edge because of the sour grapes that their parents have eaten.

It shows also, and here is a prime value of the narrative, that this view of the case is not a right view ; that all souls are God's, and that every child has God for a Father, and may claim by faith a place in the family of the redeemed. "Heredity" in this sense gives hope for every child of the Father of all, and gives a claim for brotherly help to every "outcast" child in city or country.

"Environment" may be changed, if "heredity" cannot be. An outcast child can be surrounded by the best of influences, if only those are found who will be ready to

care for him in love. In this narrative it is shown not only that the best work in caring for children is done by the individual for the individual, but also how this loving care can best be secured.

A merit of this little work is that the story is permitted to stand on its merits and to speak for itself. The writer does not intrude her own opinions, she does not claim that the course pursued with this child was, or was not, the best course to be pursued with all children in like circumstances. She simply relates graphically, and with telling power, the story of one outcast boy under the ban of all that is bad in heredity and environment, who was cared for in kindness and love by simple-hearted and well-meaning persons in a Christian family and a Christian neighborhood, and what came of it all. Any reader who is not instructed and stimu-

lated and encouraged by this story as it is here told is, to say the least, not so hopeful a subject as "your little brother James."

H. CLAY TRUMBULL.

PHILADELPHIA, October, 1896.



Your Little Brother James.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is nothing so hard to kill as a baby that nobody wants. If some one had loved your little brother—whose name was James—perchance he would have turned his face to the wall and died ; but being unloved and fatherless and a burden to his mother, who longed to be rid of him, he lived on, in spite of cold, hunger, whooping cough, measles, marasmus, and long-continued and heartless neglect—for it seems sometimes as if nature hates to make a little grave unless she knows that it is to be kept green with tears.

"It's just to plague me that he lives!" his mother cried. "Why ain't he like other people's young uns? There's nothin' ever a-goin' to kill *him*." And she set him on the floor with a hard thump.

Thus the floor became early in life the abiding place of little James, who developed, while in the crawling stage, a remarkable sagacity concerning things good and things evil; concerning pins that were meant to be held for hours in the mouth without swallowing, and apple-cores and orange skins that were to be swallowed with impunity—at least by your Little Brother James.

He was a cunning baby, after the fashion of a little cub—but with far greater need of cunning! He would lie for hours with his cheek against the floor and his thumb in his mouth; his eye fixed on a distant, unattainable, beloved object, until discretion ceased

to be the better part of valor. Then with breathless activity when the right moment came, would he wriggle over chairs, boxes, and rickety tables to carry out the long-cherished campaign of acquisition, by which a crust of bread on the window-sill became a toothsome morsel in the hungry little mouth.

As he grew older, he toddled out the front door alone into that great wide world which he knew as The Street, and which became to him henceforth home, school, and playground. When he fell down he picked himself up without haste or wounded pride, and, if hurt, he knew better than to cry aloud.

At eight years of age little James was a curly-haired, bright-eyed youngster whose knowledge of life had been gained by deep experience. The trolley cars which had lately begun to run in the neighborhood

failed in their endeavor to crush him beneath their wheels, while the horse cars which they displaced had long ago given up the attempt in despair, albeit he had always been seen on the track until the horses' hoofs were upon him—only to reappear on the curbstone smiling, unharmed and unconcerned, after the car had passed.

He attended school in an irregular fashion, and learned enough to read the signs of the shops and to write his name with chalk on the steps of other people's houses. He had become an expert in the art of pawning household goods, and ever since he could remember had undertaken these mercantile transactions, not only for his mother, but for various other women in the neighborhood.

"You take this and hock it," his mother would say, giving your Little Brother a push

down the steps, while she laid in his hands a bundle and a scrap of paper containing an almost illegible request to the pawnbroker to send the money back by bearer. Little James knew the choicest resorts where articles of all kinds could be "hocked," including those select and highly favored merchants who never asked any questions.

His mother was absent very frequently all day, and the door locked ; so that it seemed not only safe but perfectly just for little James—if he wanted anything to eat—to withhold a portion of the proceeds, and report that this was all he had received, or that he had lost the ticket, or that a big boy had robbed him of the missing pennies, or that a "Cop" had chased him, and he had fallen down and the pennies had rolled out of his pocket. He varied these explanations from time to time, and presented the most

appropriate with a winning smile and a deeply apologetic air.

A lie is a wronged child's only defense, and your Little Brother's shield of falsehood was adjusted to meet all the emergencies of life.

In the evening little James was to be seen on the street until ten and twelve o'clock at night, and sometimes all night, when it seemed the part of wisdom to keep out of his mother's sight. Very often there were visitors calling at the house. They were the "gentlemen friends" of his mother, and their coming and going had become such a matter of course that he never inquired why they came or how long they stayed. He was rather proud of his mother's popularity, and often boasted to his playmates :

"She doesn't have to work because she has so many friends."

At intervals one of the aforesaid friends resided under the same roof with little James, who knew him as "Scotch Andy," and the hideous mockery of his semi-paternal attitude was accepted by the child as a thing of evil to be endured while it lasted. While Andy was a member of the household other friends of the family were conspicuously absent for a time, and then slowly reappeared, one by one, and it was then that your Little Brother became exceedingly watchful and wary, halting at the doorway, with one foot poised for flight, his experienced ear ready to catch the familiar sound of strife within. Little skirmishes, angry discussions, and short passages at arms were to be expected, and could be easily dodged, until came the great battle of blows, shrieks, oaths, breaking of furniture and calls for the police, during which he cowered and crept out of sight,

and watched his chance to escape into the ever-welcome silent darkness of the city streets at midnight.

Your Little Brother's experiences were not confined wholly to the streets. Various charitable institutions took charge of him for limited periods, while his mother was secluded in a city prison, but he invariably escaped from their custody and returned to his old haunts. His third escape from the good intentions of the charitable made up the last indictment that deprived him of the sympathy of respectable people. The officers of the Humane Society were obliged to hunt him from shelter to shelter, from stable to packing-box, from alley to highway, until at last they collared the child and brought him before a Magistrate for commitment to a reformatory.

Little James, in his ninth year, now en-

tered the ranks of a scientific classification. He was enrolled as a "Juvenile Offender." His character was briefly summed up on the Magistrate's page as "incorrigible," and without any further charge against him than the fact that he had run away from three separate orphan asylums, he was committed to the House of Reformation.

"Why did you run away, Boy?" asked the Magistrate, with an air that was both judicial and benign.

A procession of all the things he particularly detested in institutional life passed through the mind of the small culprit, and he appreciated the importance of making a wise selection. It is always difficult to produce a creditable reason from that well of likes and dislikes which is the mysterious source of childish energy. The derrick of a daring imagination is occasionally needed to

hoist into view the overgrown, puffed-up style of Reason supposed to be acceptable to the adult intelligence.

A vision of children sitting down and standing up simultaneously at a given signal, passed through his mind ; of interminable rows of mugs and slices of bread on a long, narrow table, with benches on either side ; of a large, desolate room known as the "play-room," with nothing to play with except benches, which could not be stood on, jumped over, nor moved from their place along the wall, and the echo of an oft-repeated command rang in his ears :

"Children who put their fingers in their mouths will be sent to bed with one slice of bread and no milk."

Of course, it would be absurd to mention this last restriction to a grown-up human being. It was an idiotic, personal insult,

the memory of which filled him with scornful anger—but it could never be mentioned to an adult—least of all to a Magistrate, although it had contributed largely to his persistence in seeking escape.

All the other horrors were of the same class; they were equally unmentionable, because the universal rule of childhood is:

“Never explain to grown-up people what they cannot understand.”

So your Little Brother, after a long pause, during which he fidgeted from one foot to the other, at last drew from the depths of his mental processes the following:

“I ran away because they whipped me and didn’t give me enough to eat.”

This bold statement was promptly dissected and laid bare as a calumnious falsehood, corporal punishment being forbidden by the managers of the institution, and the

diet known to be both wholesome and abundant.

The Magistrate and the Officer of the Humane Society looked sad, and your Little Brother's pallor increased, notwithstanding his air of defiance ; but he did not whimper as the Constable stepped forward and led him away to the House of Reformation.

If the sum of his offences left anything to be desired, his rags, dirt, and scowling forehead completed the portrait of the Juvenile Offender, against whom society must arm itself with high-walled reformatories, stripes, bars, compulsory tasks, and military discipline.

And as yet he had offended no one—being but a child of nine, homeless and friendless—and many had offended him from the moment of his birth—ay, and before his birth—

and of them is it not written : " It were better that a millstone were hanged about their necks and they were thrown into the midst of the sea, rather than that they should offend one of these little ones " ?

But it is not given to the sons of men to see as do the angels in heaven, in whose eyes this child stood as the Offended One and not as the offender. It was not given to your Little Brother to speak with the tongue of men or of angels and tell the story of his wrongs. He could not explain to the worthy Magistrate, nor to the representatives of a great Christian charity organized for his protection, how unendurable seemed the restraints of the well-managed Homes from which he had escaped ; how dear and familiar those muddy streets which his baby feet had trod as nursery and playground. Nor could he describe the shame and despair that fill the

heart of the charity child when he finds himself robbed of all individuality. Like an infant Hercules he had wrestled with the monster Neglect, and had wrung the gift of life from a thousand untoward circumstances. But this pitiful, unnatural independence of a baby, with its silent reproach for the past and its dreadful significance for the future, served only to fit him with a title that was so effective as to place him at once beyond the pale of human sympathy.

CHAPTER II.

“**A**RE all these young children really bad?” asked a gentle-faced visitor as she stood in the centre of the well-lighted workshop in which two hundred inmates of the Reformatory were busily engaged. The Prefect lowered his voice as he replied, with emphasis :

“I don’t like to shock you, Madam, but I assure you every boy in this room is more or less depraved and unfit to associate with other boys. It would be an outrage to allow them their liberty.”

The visitor shivered, and looked from one boy to another with evident shrinking. Little James was among the workers, and bent his cropped head low over his task. He had

overheard neither question nor answer, but he understood perfectly the meaning of her glance. His mind was already stamped with the consciousness of his classification, and one of the greatest of the many unavoidable evils of a reformatory was rapidly sapping the foundations of character.

Your Little Brother soon fell into a routine of work, study, pastime, and punishment. He attached himself to various comrades, and discussed with the air of a connoisseur the petty crimes for which these lads had been committed to the institution. No care on the part of the managers and superintendent was able to prevent this filtering of evil knowledge from the graduates in crime to the beginners. The deeds of the juvenile law-breaker became the common property of the inmates. The first question asked of a new arrival was :

“What did you do to get here?”

His story of transgression was heard with eagerness, and passed from one to another. In this way, boys who had done nothing worse than play truant from school learnt all there was to learn of till-tapping, house-breaking, and petty larceny of all kinds. Little James heard many a detail he had never known before, and imparted similar information to those who came to the institution more innocent than himself.

He progressed rapidly in the school-room and labored with great apparent zeal in the workshop. He discovered the art of chewing tobacco without detection—notwithstanding that the practice was strictly forbidden—and learned to sham sickness in order to escape overwork; to listen attentively to the discourse in chapel, and to sell forbidden eatables to his comrades at the

same moment. His knowledge of crime became greatly extended, while at the same time he earned two honor marks and a pocket knife for good conduct.

But after six months of reformation he was unexpectedly discharged into the custody of his mother, who, for reasons of her own, applied for his release immediately after her own from the House of Correction. The Reformatory happened to be overcrowded at the time, and he was permitted to leave it before the expiration of his term in order to make room for others.

After his release it seemed to little James that the streets were swarming with ex-inmates of the House of Reformation.

He met them on every street corner, and claimed their acquaintance in that spirit of free masonry that distinguishes tramps and jail-birds all the world over.

A few months later he was drawn into a company of petty thieves calling themselves the "Flying Heels," several of the members having made his acquaintance in the Reformatory. Your Little Brother was delighted to accompany them on their nightly pilgrimages. His mother being again under arrest, he took up his abode with his new friends.

An agile, quick-witted, trusty little boy is useful in all emergencies, but for purposes of crime he is doubly valuable if he happens to possess an innocent, childish face, and can look you straight in the eye and tell an astounding falsehood without winking. Your Little Brother could do all this, and he had besides a vast experience in disposing of salable goods. He was put forward to do the dangerous part of the work—to climb through the broken shutter of a store, to

squeeze through the iron grating of a cellar window, and to open the door of a vacated house at midnight to his more cautious companions.

The "Flying Heels" dealt chiefly in lead pipe. This may not seem to the uninitiated a very valuable commodity, but to petty thieves there is nothing more alluring than the prospect of such booty. It has a recognized market value, and there are places where it can be sold and no questions asked. If questions were asked, your Little Brother could always parry them, and utterly mislead and confound his interlocutors. Many were the adventures in which he figured as the hero, and the depredations of the gang were becoming a source of mystery and annoyance to the police.

It was in September that the climax of these adventures was reached. An unoccu-

pied house was broken into and yards of expensive plumbing were cut away to the destruction of fine woodwork, frescoed ceilings, and velvet carpets. Little James, growing bolder with each victory, carried a sample of the booty to a hitherto untried dealer. The man examined the pipe carelessly and turned to the dusty shelves to replace a faded shawl—and to press an electric button.

The little thief waited impatiently and half angrily for his decision, but without any sense of danger—until a hand was laid upon his shoulder and he found himself in the grasp of a powerful city detective. Tears and struggles were of no avail. By night he was lodged in the Central Station House, and after a brief hearing the next morning before a Magistrate, he was carried in a van with a number of adult prisoners,

and thrust into a cell in the county prison to await trial at court.

The waiting cell of a city prison is not a pleasant resort, even to the most degraded criminal. The air is close, the food intolerable, and the walls, floor, and bedding generally infested with rats and vermin. Your Little Brother wept bitterly for days after his incarceration. The vermin distressed him by day, the rats terrified him at night, and the food at all times made him ill. The hours of darkness were insupportably long, and after daylight had faded from the high, narrow aperture that served as a window, little James fell upon his knees and sobbed aloud with his head pressed against the stone wall. The screams of miserable wretches insane from drink, pierced the stone walls (impenetrable only to joy and sunlight) and smote his ear with fresh terror.

“ Oh, Mister, gimme a pardner—why can’t I have a pardner ?” he wailed.

A kind-hearted keeper, who brought him soup and bread, smiled grimly, and thrust in a burglar of nineteen to share his cell. This soothed the fears and added greatly to the comfort of your Little Brother. He fell asleep without more tears. The time passed quickly the next day, and the hours were spent in talking, playing cards, and chewing tobacco.

Sunday was distinct from other days, owing to the arrival of a band of evangelists, who sang hymns and preached a sermon for the benefit of the prisoners. When the service was over, the door of the cell opened, and a middle-aged gentleman, hymn-book in hand, opened a conversation with his little younger Brother, whom he failed to recognize.

"How shocking to see a little boy in a place like this! What have you been doing?"

"I got took up," said little James, tearfully, ignoring first causes.

"You see," continued the old gentleman cheerfully, "the way of the transgressor is always hard. I have very little time to-day, as I have a great many poor souls to talk to. But I want you to remember two things—one is that Jesus loves you, and the other is, that He wants you to love Him. Do you know who Jesus is?"

"Yes," lisped the Little Brother, looking up with eagerness, having been carefully coached by the burglar of nineteen to meet all the requirements of Sunday visitors, "He was born in a manger in Bethlehem of Judee; I heered all about Him in Sunday-school."

"And He says, 'Suffer them to come

unto Me,' even such little children as you. Dear me, this is a sad sight, a sad sight !' for the haggard beauty of the upturned, tear-stained face of his Little Brother at that moment revealed the relationship and smote his heart. Little James had indeed the face of an angel, and stood peering through the iron grating as if Heaven lay outside and Hell within those iron boundaries.

"Can't you git me out?" he asked, plaintively.

"That is beyond my power," answered the preacher, sadly. "I fear you will have to take the consequences of your sin. Is there anything else I can do for you?" Your Little Brother pushed closer to the grating and gazed with all his soul into the eyes of the philanthropist.

"Can't you git me a *leetle* piece o' tobaccy?" he asked wistfully.

The burglar of nineteen in the rear of the cell waited hopefully for the result of this momentous petition—in which he had more than a joint interest—and continued to hold an open Testament piously on his knee. The worthy preacher withdrew, shaking his head mournfully. The keeper made his appearance and closed the iron door as the evangelist moved away.

“He is a bad one,” said the keeper, emphatically. “Looks little and innocent, but he is the leader of a gang of thieves—that young rascal—and only nine years old !”

“I suppose it is a case of natural depravity,” commented the philanthropist, cheered by an hypothesis that seemed to clear all righteous souls of responsibility.

“That’s it—natural depravity and no bringing up ; allowed to run the streets day

and night, and this is what it brings 'em to."

The suggestion of environment as an allied factor in the case did not disturb the old gentleman's theory, for he continued his study of social phenomena from cell to cell without any further unpleasant consciousness of being his Little Brother's keeper. He felt indeed a renewed confidence in the eternal fitness of things which ordained from the first, that he should adorn the outside and his brother the inside of a prison cell.

The day of the trial came at last after seventeen days of imprisonment. Dear, gentle mothers, who would suffer self-reproach if you shut your naughty darlings within a closet for thirty seconds, calculate if you can, the mental, moral, and physical effect of shutting a child of nine in a prison cell for seventeen long weary days !

Little James was dazed by the shifting scenes of one's day's experience—the van, the crowded court-room, the prisoners' dock, the witness stand—and deeply impressed was he by the officers of justice and the court crier, whom he mistook for the Judge, until he finally distinguished that arbiter of his fate—a grave, over-worked elder brother, sitting immovably calm above the sea of faces.

Ragged, bare-footed, and filthy, your Little Brother faced the Court, and in faint, faltering accents acknowledged his share of the criminal transaction. He was so small that he had to be stood upon a chair in the prisoner's dock in order to be seen by the Court, and so ragged was he that his chest and right arm were entirely bare. Only his trousers held together, and they being too large, were clutched firmly in his little dirty

left hand to prevent slipping. When asked by the District Attorney how much he received of the booty, he lisped :

"I didn't git nothin' but six cents," in such an aggrieved, childish whisper, that everybody in the court-room laughed, and even the Judge smiled.

Little James resented the laughter, having expected sympathy instead. The older lads had escaped with nearly all the booty, leaving him the risk, the punishment, and six cents ! He scowled and hung his head, and the tears came into his eyes. Further evidence was presented to show that this was not his first offense, and that he had already served a term in the House of Reformation, which facts he stoutly denied, knowing them to be to his disadvantage.

The officers of the Humane Society appeared, and related again the story of his

midnight wanderings and frequent escapes from the orphan asylums, thus proving that he had always been incorrigible—or homeless. In the eyes of the law they were much the same thing. Altogether, things began to look very black for your Little Brother. The forces of law and order were ranged against him, and even the tender hand of charity was raised to strike him down—at least, so it seemed to the little Offended One, as his wide-opened, frightened eyes turned from one to another strange face.

At last he raised his eyes to the Judge, whom he had hardly dared to glance during the trial, and saw with surprise that he was engaged in conversation with a strange lady, who stood with upturned, eager face, and the Judge's countenance wore its kindest expression. He listened attentively, nodded, and the strange lady extended her hand and



"The forces of law and order were ranged against him, and even the tender hand of charity was raised to strike him down."—Page 40.

thanked him with an air of gratitude and a smile.

The Judge took his seat and announced briefly that he would commit the child to a charitable association that had undertaken to provide him with a home and proper care.

“He needs both more than punishment. You can take him, Madam,” and he inclined his head graciously toward the strange lady who had converted him to this novel view of a juvenile law-breaker. But he was really delighted to escape the unwelcome necessity of committing another little wretch to a Reformatory.

At such an unexpected and wholly incomprehensible sentence, little James, who had braced himself to expect the worst, concluded that some particularly terrible doom had been selected for him. With a burst of tears he sank into a heap of rags and curls on the

chair. An officer of the court lifted him out of the prisoners' dock and set him on his feet beside the strange lady, who clasped his hand firmly and led him forth into the open air.

As they passed along the street, she devoted herself to carefully adjusted conversational efforts with her small charge, but the boy answered in monosyllables, with his face turned away. Every object in the street appeared to be of absorbing interest to him just at that moment. He gazed longingly at a slop-cart drawn by a jaded old horse, and when that passed at a fire-plug, turning his head to inspect it critically from time to time, until it vanished from sight as they turned a street corner.

A wild squirrel from the woods would have been more responsive than was your Little Brother, who conceived that he was now

within the grasp of another gigantic philanthropic machine with reformatory screws attached, to be set in motion later. More than hunger or cold did he dread the prospect of being reformed, and he secretly determined to resist all such efforts and to escape as soon as possible, unless prevented by stone walls of unusual thickness and height.

"You will like the country when you get there," the lady said, despairingly, as they passed within the doorway of the society's office.

Your Little Brother's mental picture of the country included a large stone building with innumerable inmates in uniform, and invisible but inflexible rules controlling every impulse. The country might lie like a boundless prairie on every side, but it formed nothing more than a colorless background to the central figure of the Reform School,

which rose prominently in all his visions of philanthropy.

"I don't want to go to no Country," he answered, with a burst of tears. "I want to go home to my mother." Like all street urchins, he knew the value of this appeal to the maternal instincts, but he was miserably apprehensive that the sensibilities of even a female apostle of organized benevolence lay forever beyond his reach.

With a cold sinking of the heart he realized that his effort was a failure, for the hand tightened on his shoulder, and the face—albeit a woman's—grew stern instead of tender.

CHAPTER III.

YOU cannot buy a railroad ticket for North Elk Village, nor can those iron rails that now represent civilization bring you within fourteen miles of that little spot which hardly seems worthy of representation on Rand & McNally's county and railroad map.

But the forty-seven householders of North Elk are not conscious of their isolation, nor do they submit willingly to a detachment from human interests. The Stony Creek stage brings the mail every day, including eleven city newspapers for the leading citizens of the town. The lesser lights are content to borrow the news, or to wait, as do most of the female inhabitants, until the

weekly county paper sums up in a single column the events of the outside world for the past week.

The village lies in a hollow, so that roads leading out of it rise abruptly and climb slowly and very circuitously the dark wooded heights of the surrounding hills.


Inquiry at the village store for one Joshua Hillis would cause considerable discussion as to the best way to reach the Hillis farm. It is five miles distant, and an attempt to follow either the store-keeper or his customers' intricate directions results always in utter bewilderment and the despairing determination to inquire afresh of every passer-by—"the way to Joshua Hillis," which plan, if pursued with the zeal of an African explorer, will reward the traveler with a belated success.

Joshua Hillis' house stands on the summit

of a high hill, over which the road makes its way with difficulty. The house is white, with green shutters, with a short, grassy terrace in front, reached by stone steps from the road. On either side are handsome sugar maples, tossing yellow and red leaves to the ground with every breath of wind. There is a porch in front, and a bay window is at the side, the latter crowded with geraniums and other plants, and bordered with a modest curtain of white muslin. It is a cheerful-looking mansion, and excessively neat. The woodpile to the left is symmetrical as human hands can make it. The red barn is in good repair. Across the road, as far as the eye can reach, stretch acres of pasture-lands varied by strips of cornfield and patches of buckwheat—green, gold, and red—and beyond this lies a strip of woodland, all that is left of the “black growth,”

which once covered the valleys and hills when Joshua's forefathers broke the ground for the building of a rude log cabin, and swung the axe which laid at their feet the first hemlock that had ever fallen in those parts by the hand of man.

The Hillis farm came into Joshua's hands when he was thirty-five years old, just six years after his marriage. Life had then become more pleasant to the inhabitants of the highlands; the oxen were exchanged for a pair of horses; the axe gave way to the plough; the spinning-wheel to the sewing-machine, and the log cabin to the comfortable homestead, and later to the white cottage which is now the characteristic dwelling of that part of the Appalachian range, that loses its peaks in the high, rolling tableland of Northern Pennsylvania and Southern New York.



Joshua improved his farm with the rest, and built the white house on the hill soon after the birth of his first and only child. Everything prospered under his hands ; the land grew valuable with constant care, the cattle flourished, the sheep grew strong on the hills ; but the little boy, who was more valuable than all of these, and whose hands had never known harder work than the tossing of a ball or the flying of a kite, died suddenly of diphtheria, and was laid away at the foot of the hill, beside those toilers of the past who had cleared the wilderness and broken the paths for his benefit. The sunlight seemed less bright on those hills, the sky less beautiful since that day.

The husband and wife toiled on, and adorned their home with many comforts. They were counted prosperous by their neighbors, and were prominent members of

the North Elk Church, and were always to be seen at country "sociables" and village gatherings—Emeline in her crisp black silk, and Joshua as neat and comely as wifely hands could make him.

Joshua had reached his forty-third year, and Emeline was past thirty-seven years of age. They were sitting one evening beside the hanging lamp which illuminated the little sitting-room so brightly. Joshua had returned from the North Elk post-office, where he received his mail, and husband and wife were deeply absorbed in the contents of a letter bearing the postmark of the distant city. It proved to be a printed document in the form of a series of questions with space for written answers.

Emeline had heard much of a society which sent children into the country to board, and had obtained the address from a

cousin who was boarding a city waif in an adjoining county. Emeline had written to the society timidly applying for a child, and this was the reply. It gave no information whatever, but asked a great deal of Emeline. Some of the questions were very pertinent, not to say impertinent.

"They want to know if we own our farm," she exclaimed, looking up, pen in hand.

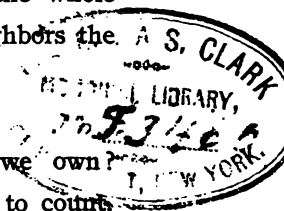
"Well, we do, all except that mortgage," answered the matter-of-fact Joshua. "I'm not ashamed, are you?"

"Shall we say how much the mortgage is?"

"Two hundred. Let's tell the whole truth, Emmy, and save our neighbors the trouble."

Emeline wrote it down.

"How much live stock do we own? Well, I declare"—Joshua began to count



"Eight head of cows, two heifers, four calves, twenty-two sheep, two horses, and one colt."

"A dog and six cats, and a canary bird," added Emeline.

"Put them all in, Emmy. What next?"

To what newspapers and periodicals do you subscribe? "Do you think it's any of their concern what newspapers we take?"

"Well, now, I presume there's folks living in the backwoods, Emmy, that never sees a newspaper once in six months, and don't know who's President, maybe. I presume the society is thinking of such like and these questions is kind of leaders so they'll know where to place us."

"I presume that's so," returned Emeline, cheerfully, for she had a beautiful wifely trait of suggesting a doubt for the sole purpose of yielding it gracefully to her hus-

band's superior logic, and this readiness to be convinced on all occasions caused Joshua to describe her as the "wisest little woman in the world."

"Now here come references. They must be neighbors, it says."

"Well, there's Zebulon Post, Joshua Camp, Dr. Woodbury, and, well, I guess, Josiah Slocum."

"Why, Joshua, you know he's no friend of ours since he stoned our turkey gobbler last spring for scratching up his radishes, and you gave him a piece of your mind."

"I didn't know as it said anything about *friends*, Emmy; I thought we was to give in the names of our neighbors. I presume what these folks is trying to get at is whether we're the right sort to have the care of children. What they want is the onvar-

nished truth, and that's what they ought to get."

"It would be hard for the poor little orphans to get into wrong hands—that's true," assented Emeline, thoughtfully, but she added Mr. Slocum's name with reluctance.

"Now, there's only one question more, Joshua, and that's kind of a suspicious one."

What is your object in desiring to take a child to board? "It seems as if they kind of mistrusted us, doesn't it?"

Joshua studied for a correct answer. "Let's say we're lonely here without children, and we'd like to pay off that mortgage. It would pay it off if we kept the child two years."

"Don't you think that sounds graspin', as if we cared for the money?" objected Emeline.

"It's the truth, Emmy—that's what we want the money for, and it ain't saying as we are going to misuse the boy, is it?"

"We ought to treat him all the better because of the pay," agreed Emeline.

"Goodness me, who'd want to misuse a poor little orphan anyways? Seems to me, Joshua, folks couldn't do enough for a child coming all ready-made from the city, and paid for, too."

She folded up the paper and directed the envelope with a careful hand. Joshua put the letter in his pocket, and promised to mail it the next morning. A week passed, during which Emeline was constantly watching for the coming of the child. Joshua had driven to the post-office every day for letters, but nothing more was heard from the society. Emeline arranged a little single bed in the spare-room, next to hers, and covered the

floor with a piece of new rag carpet. There were flowers in the window and two pictures on the wall—one representing the Saviour blessing little children, and the other the little Samuel in prayer. Everything was in readiness for the child, but still he came not. Emeline was sure that their answers were not accepted as satisfactory. Perhaps the society objected to the mortgage, or had heard an unfavorable report from the unfriendly Slocum. She was sure something was wrong, and worried herself almost sick over it; but Joshua seemed indifferent and said nothing, yet in his heart he yearned for the presence of the child, and never came in from the fields without hoping to find the little stranger on his hearth.

One day, two horses and a buggy drove up the steep hill and stopped in front of the little white house. Joshua had observed it

from the field, and decided that it was a livery team from the distant railroad station. Perhaps the child had come at last. When he reached the house he found Emeline trembling with excitement. A lady in a gray cloak and looking decidedly travel-worn and weary was sitting by the window. Emeline was describing their hopes and fears, and explaining why she thought they could take care of a child.

“We’re lonely ; we’re both fond of children, and thought it would keep us young to have a little one about the house—and then, you know, we told you about the mortgage.”

“We can pay off the mortgage without boarding anybody else’s child, Emmy,” said Joshua, the proud and inconsistent. “The money will come handy, of course, but it’s not just the money we’re after. If

Emeline and me didn't have our hearts set on that child we'd never look this way to get our farm clear of debt ; but the two things seem to fit together—the money will pay off the mortgage, and I presume we can benefit the child. Is that satisfactory ?”

“ Perfectly,” said the visitor. “ Will you show me where you would have the child sleep ?”

Emeline led the way upstairs to the little bed-room. The visitor took it in at a glance.

“ The stove from the sitting-room heats this room, too,” Emeline explained, showing the opening in the floor to the room below.

“ We thought perhaps you had heard something against us,” she murmured, with a blush. “ Mr. Slocum—didn't he—”

“ He wrote us that we couldn't find a better home for a child.”

“There, Emmy ; Slocum ain’t got the grudge you gave him credit for ! He knew all along that I said no more’n the truth when I spoke my mind so free to him.”

Emeline was radiant with pleasure. “And when is the child coming?” she whispered to the visitor.

“He’s out in the buggy ; I’ll call him in,” and she disappeared quickly out the door. In a few minutes she returned, leading by the hand your Little Brother James, restored to the very least of his rights—the right to be clean and fair to look upon—and the hero of the prison cell, the reformatory, and the streets, stood for the first time in his life on the threshold of a Christian home.

If you had seen him at that moment, you would not have hesitated to claim him as a little brother. It seemed as if the Criminal

had been laid aside, with the rags and filth of the slums, and the Child was now apparent, proudly conscious of his improved appearance and the glory of his new apparel, which, to his critical, boyish mind, elevated him to a level with all the happy, well-cared-for children in Christendom. He sat down carefully on the edge of a chair, and laid his well-filled canvas bag of clothing, of which he was justly proud, on the floor by his side. Emeline gazed at him with rapture, but in her shy excitement knew not what to say. He seemed to her a creature from another world—so strikingly handsome and yet with such pale and delicate features, sharpened somewhat by hunger and privation. His deep-set, dark-blue eyes looked unnaturally large, and gave a pathetic expression to his face. The crowning beauty of all was the mass of thick yellow curls which clustered

over his forehead, giving almost the effect of a halo.

There was so much to be said that ought not to be said in the presence of the child that Emeline led the visitor to another room, where she tried to collect her thoughts and understand fully the requirements of the society. The visitor talked very earnestly, striving to impress on Emeline's mind some idea of the life the little boy had led in the city, and expressing a hope that they would not expose him to temptation nor suffer the smallest action to go unheeded. He was to be under strict surveillance, and it would require the greatest patience to train him properly. Emeline and Joshua listened intelligently, and thought they understood all that was said.


They promised faithfully to comply with the requirements of the society, but their

chief fear was that the city child would not be happy in his new home.

"It will be hard for him until he gets used to our country ways," said Emeline, wiping her eyes furtively.

The visitor departed, after bidding her little charge good-bye with much tenderness, and promising to call and see him soon. Emeline and Joshua followed her to the buggy and held another hurried conversation out-of-doors. The visitor finally tore herself away, and the buggy vanished over the brow of the hill.

When Emeline returned to the kitchen she found the little boy sitting where she had left him, crying bitterly. He had not expected to be deserted in this fashion and felt a good deal as you would feel, dear reader, if the Mayor, or some other high dignitary, were to take you by the hand and



lead you gently, but firmly into the wilds of Patagonia, believing such a remote spot more conducive to your morals than the excitements of the Stock Exchange or the luxurious independence of a woman's club. He had become also rather attached to the visitor during the long journey, and regarded her sudden desertion as base, and thoroughly in keeping with his preconceived notions of the heartlessness of philanthropists.

"They're goin' to bind me out to a farmer," he muttered with a fresh burst of tears. The neat home-like kitchen, with its ticking clock, cheerful fire, and the canary bird in the window failed to bring comfort to his mind.

Emeline, with her heart full of pity, stroked his head tenderly and laid a rosy apple in his hand—the tears did not cease to

flow, but he thoughtfully put the apple in his pocket.

"Come with me, my boy," said Joshua, "and I'll show you a baby horse that ain't afraid to eat out of your hand." A baby horse struck the city boy as something of a novelty, so he dried his eyes and followed Joshua to the stable.

On his return he found the table set with a white cloth and a great variety of eatables thereon. There were three kinds of preserves, and two of canned fruit; two large pies, three kinds of pickles, a steaming dish of potatoes, another of ham and eggs, an immense plate of home-made bread in thick slices, a great round of butter, a plate of cookies, and a jug of milk.

Your Little Brother had never seen a table set with such plenty before, and his eyes grew round with wonder. Joshua sat down



and motioned James to a seat by his side, and the boy slid into a chair overcome with bashfulness and hunger. Like all well-regulated country families, Emeline and Joshua began by giving thanks, after which, the meal proceeded without ceremony.

To say that little James did justice to those wholesome viands would but feebly express his appreciation. Joshua and Emeline had never seen a child eat quite so much, but then they had never before seen a child who for seventeen days had partaken of the delicacies of prison fare. It seemed as if he could not quite fill up the vacuum which that dreadful experience had caused. The last course of all was the plate of cookies, which Emeline handed him, laying a delightfully browned morsel sparkling with white sugar on his plate. Your Little Brother was unable to eat more than one,

but after Joshua and his wife had risen from the table, he managed, by a quick, sly movement of his hand to transfer half a dozen of the delectable cookies to his trousers' pocket, after which he felt happier, and strolled over to the window in great peace of mind.

It seemed to your Little Brother nothing more than a wise precaution to lay by some of this over-abundant meal for a future occasion. How could he know that such plenty would ever appear again, and especially those particular cookies? In his experience a feast had always been followed by a famine.

He looked out the window and again over his shoulder at the busy Emeline, who was occupied with dish washing. Joshua had disappeared. Your Little Brother waited until Emeline chanced to leave the room with a pile of shining dishes in her hands,

when he slipped quickly out-of-doors and walked about, carelessly kicking the pebbles with his feet.


Presently he found what he wanted, a large, smooth, gray stone resting against the fence, and wrapping the cookies in his handkerchief he deposited them carefully in a little hollow, which he scooped out of the earth with his hands, and laid the big stone over them. It was so neatly done that not a vestige of the handkerchief remained in sight, and it was the work of a few seconds only.

Emeline, from the kitchen window, had observed this performance, feeling (in obedience to the visitor's instructions) in duty bound to keep her charge in sight. So far she was unable to discover what the buried treasure might be.

Just at that moment a beautiful shepherd

dog, with tawny mane and tail, came bounding joyfully toward the little boy, as if to welcome him as an acceptable play-fellow. Little James started back half-frightened, but, accepting the overtures as friendly, patted the dog shyly on the back. Rover pranced, wagged, and barked; and then, pausing as if struck by a sudden thought, stood with his long pointed nose sniffing the wind.

With a flourish of his handsome tail, he whisked about and rushed to the stone that covered the buried treasure. As it was too heavy to be easily moved, he proceeded to dig under it with rapid, vigorous strokes of his powerful paws, and behold! out came the treasure with a jerk, held by a corner of the handkerchief in Rover's mouth, and tossed proudly aloft for exhibition. The little boy attempted to rescue it, but failed,



and Rover proceeded to shake the handkerchief fiercely, scattering the cookies right and left on the ground. James gathered them up as quickly as possible, and crammed them into his pocket. He did not betray either anger or mortification at this exposure of his little scheme, but seated himself contentedly on the large stone and threw pieces of the cake at the dog, who was now engaged in wreaking playful vengeance on the handkerchief. This was soon dropped for the cookies, and your Little Brother, forgetful of the future, threw them away one by one in broken pieces, and entered into an exciting and delightful game of romping, in which the deep barks of the dog were mingled with the merry shouts and laughter of the child.


Emeline was well pleased to witness his enjoyment, but much mystified by the concealment of the cookies.

"It's what you might expect of a dog," she said to Joshua, "but it seems kinder uncommon behavior in a child."

"Probably he don't know what it is to have enough and plenty to eat," suggested Joshua, "and he's laying by for the time when he's hungry again. We don't know what that child's been through in his life-time, Emmy."

"Yes," assented Emeline, "he has a kind o' look on his face as if he mistrusted everybody, and I presume he allows that you and me are going to misuse him and grudge him even a few cookies."

Joshua took his hat from its peg and went out to bring in the cows, for it was now milking time. He called the little boy to accompany him, and ordered the facetious Rover to "quit his pranks and fetch in the cows." Rover started off immediately and



sprang over the fence and up the hill as swiftly as a fox pursued by hunters.

Joshua and your Little Brother followed leisurely. Rover soon appeared at the top of the hill, barking and bounding at the heels of the cows, who were trotting obediently homeward, with the exception of a foolish heifer—persistently bent on returning to the pasture. Joshua and his little companion were soon out of the lane and ascending the hillside, where they waited for the cows.

Rover in his zeal had worried the unwise heifer into a state of excitement in which she hardly knew what she was about. Cantering recklessly down the hill, she was about to turn aside to avoid her master, when your Little Brother courageously headed her off on the right with open arms and terrific shouts. The older and more se-

date cows closed in on the rear, and she finally yielded to their pressure and followed the herd until they reached the bars. Here some turned back, confused by the presence of a stranger and annoyed by Rover's exciting barks.

Your nimble Little Brother, eager to distinguish himself again, flew to the rear, and, picking up a small stone, flung it at the hindmost cow with the unerring aim of a street Arab, accompanying the action with a string of choice adjectives and oaths, such as had been addressed to him since infancy.

Joshua's powerful hand grasped your Little Brother's arm sternly, and his face flushed with anger.

"That language ain't to be used here—not on my farm nor to any of my cattle."

"I didn't mean nothin'," murmured your Little Brother, dismayed and terrified. "I

was only tellin' them cows the way to go."

"It's not fit language for cattle to hear, nor little boys to speak," continued the shocked Joshua, in milder tones, for he noticed the pallor that came over the boy's face, and the sudden shrinking of the small form. "They've yet to hear the first curse-word from me—I don't swear at them myself, nor allow them that lives with me to misuse 'em; it ain't Christian-like."


"I didn't know as it was wrong to swear at cows," replied your Little Brother, ingenuously, his confidence restored as soon as he found himself released without a blow; "I knowed it wasn't right to swear at Christians, but I didn't know as it mattered for Jews or 'Dagoes' or dumb things like cows."

"Well, I calculate that my cows *is* Christian," asserted Joshua with decision. "They live in a Christian country, with Christian folk, and they behave peaceable and proper."

"I wouldn't a swore at 'em if I'd knowed that," apologized little James sweetly ; "I thought they was just common cows like we have in the city. But I won't swear agin at nothin'. I didn't mean no harm ; I like them Christian cows real well."

"They're only used to kindness ; Emeline and me don't holler at our cattle, nor beat them. 'Tain't worth while, when you can make them mind just as well without."

Emeline came out in her sun-bonnet and assisted at the milking, after which Joshua and his small companion were summoned to the supper table.



This was another abundant meal, of which your Little Brother partook heartily.

The rolling landscape outside grew dim, and James could barely see the outside of a stone fence and the waving boughs of trees. Night was falling and he was glad of the warmth and comfort within. The hanging lamp in the sitting-room was lighted and a wood fire made, to take the chill off the autumn evening.

"If you get hungry between meals," Emeline said, with a gentle smile, "you'll come to me for a 'piece,' or a couple of cookies, won't you?"

The little boarder looked up suspiciously, but Emeline gave no sign of superior knowledge.

"It won't do to let him know we've been watching him," she thought; "he

might think us mistrustful, and if he just knows he can have all he wants for the askin', there won't be any occasion to take things."

Little James, sitting in a large, old-fashioned chair by the stove, while Emeline bent over some sewing, and Joshua spread out his newspaper, was soon overcome with drowsiness and fell fast asleep. Joshua and Emeline talked in low tones about their new responsibility, and concluded that he would need "a deal o' watchin'," but they hoped he would listen to advice and would take training. Joshua carried him up-stairs to his little room, and Emeline undressed him and laid him in the cozy feather bed.

"We won't hear him his prayers to-night," observed Emeline; "he's that tired and sleepy I presume he wouldn't know

what he was sayin', but we can mention him in our prayers, Joshua," and they took the lamp down-stairs. And thus ended the child's first day's experience as a recognized little brother.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of James' greatest pleasures in his new life was to accompany Joshua to the creamery, or to the post-office, behind the handsome, spirited team of black horses, of which Joshua was so proud, and which yielded such wonderful submission to his voice and touch. Jill was the older and more experienced horse of the two, and Joshua explained to his little companion that Jack, being a colt, notwithstanding his superior size, had from the first to be hitched to a quieter mate in order to be "broken in," and it was still unsafe to drive him alone.

There was nothing more delightful than these rides in the early morning through

lonely autumn woods and up a winding mountain road, which sometimes appeared so narrow that little James held his breath with excitement when they came face to face with another team, especially if they passed on the outside and could look down the precipitous slope, and feel the front wheel of their tilting wagon crushing the soft moss and underbrush that covered the sides of the ravine up to the very edge of the road.

The prancing, pawing, and plunging of the excited Jack at such times were perfectly thrilling to behold, and your Little Brother would laugh fearlessly and look with delight into the strong, dark face of his companion, relaxing just a little to smile at the antics of his colt, as he tightened the rein and recovered control by a quick word of command.

"You don't never have to lick him?" observed little James, after Jack had pranced and snorted more than usual, plunging forward at times as if to break loose altogether from the traces.

"It's no use to lick him when he don't mean to be ugly," replied Joshua serenely; "he's only feelin' good this morning."

"You don't lick nothin', do yer?" said James, with a sudden, shy glance; "not even boys, do yer?"

"I don't know as I ever had any special call to lick boys," answered Joshua reflectively. "I never had but one and he—well, Emmy and me didn't ever say a cross word to him in 'our lives, but he's gone, Jamie, and we haven't had any little boys around till you come."

James glanced up again, and Joshua answered the look with his half melancholy

smile, as he put the reins into his hands and bade him drive up the hill.

It was soon found necessary, however, to devise some method of punishment for the extraordinary misdeeds of your Little Brother, whose ingenuity in planning mischief was equaled only by the guileless innocence with which he met reproof.

Joshua's most severe punishment was a refusal to take the boy with him on his trips, and he then remained with Emeline, and divided his attentions between the five kittens in the barn, and the ever-playful Rover, whom he loved dearly and conversed with as if he were a human being. However keen his disappointment, his prevailing sweetness of temper prevented any exhibition of temper or sulkiness. He waited on Emeline with amiable alacrity, carrying in armfuls of wood and pails of

water, and performing various other little chores with the gallantry of a chevalier. But he had no sooner won her approbation than he was discovered in some naughty prank that threw her into the greatest discouragement.

"It seems as if he was the slyest young one that ever lived!" exclaimed Emeline one evening, after their small charge had been securely tucked in bed. "Whenever I think I know where he's at, he's just sure to turn up somewhere else."

"I wouldn't mind so much," observed Joshua, knitting his brows, "if he'd only quit lying, but you know, Emeline, he can lie and look you right in the face as innocent as an angel."

Finally Joshua informed little James that lies were henceforth to be punished severely, but the truth frankly told would save

him from punishment, however grave the misdeed. To his surprise this announcement worked like a charm. Your Little Brother accepted it literally, and with the most engaging candor confessed every fault as soon as questioned. This was a relief to Joshua, but his capacity for wrongdoing, or at least for mischief, was something abnormal. Nothing in the house, the barn, or the tool chest was to be found in its place since the arrival of little James. The rake was left out-of-doors to rust in the rain, the carriage whip was used for a fishing line, and every spool of cotton, thimble, and five-cent piece, if left within reach, found its way into the capacious pockets of the little boarder's trousers.

Emeline lived in a state of constant anxiety, and was never at rest unless she knew that the boy was with Joshua, whom

he followed devotedly from one end of the farm to the other.

As for sending him to school, the society strongly advised a postponement until he should become accustomed to his new surroundings, but he was already eager to go.

On Sunday, he accompanied them to the North Elk Church, where he looked so beautiful in his best clothes, and gazed at the minister with such absorbing interest, that the whole congregation watched him with admiration.

"This is our little boy," Emeline would say proudly, when the service was over, as, with her hand upon his shoulder, she returned the greetings of friends and neighbors.

"We think a great deal of him, and we hope he's beginning to think as much of us."



"He accompanied them to the North Elk Church."—Page 84.



"I wish we had just such a little boy," many of the neighbors would say longingly. "I would like to have one just like him," and Emeline frequently gave them the address of the society.

Little James accepted this adulation with delight, and held up his head proudly, giving a winning smile to every one who announced a deep interest in "Emeline's boy."

Although filled with a strange, ecstatic sense of happiness, he accepted his new life without questioning the future or reflecting on the past. He realized, however, that he had been transplanted to a higher social atmosphere, and the fact, however vaguely understood, caused him deep satisfaction.

One day Joshua announced that he expected to visit a small town about twenty

miles away to purchase some sheep, and, as he proposed to drive them home himself, he would probably be absent several days. Your Little Brother begged to accompany him, but Joshua thought the trip too fatiguing, and made his plans to start alone and on horseback.

Emeline and James went in the buggy as far as Great Elk, where Joshua left them. The eyes of your Little Brother filled with tears as Emeline turned Jill's head homeward, and started up the road that skirted the first ridge they had to cross. Not even the pleasure of driving Jill all the way home could quite compensate him for Joshua's absence, and the crushing disappointment of being left behind.

It had already been discovered that little James' mind must be occupied if it were to be kept out of mischief, and Emeline

• did her best to overcome his loneliness by inventing countless errands to the barn-yard, unheard-of attentions to the cattle, sheep, and chickens, all of which were dear to your Little Brother's heart. Most ready was he at all times to serve them—and he was becoming as gentle and courteous in his treatment of them as Joshua himself; but after he had thrown down enough hay to last Jill a week, and had fed her on all the mixtures of grain that the barn afforded, and had curried the colt, and watered both so often that they refused to take another sip, there was really nothing else to be done in the barn until milking time, and that was several hours off yet.

He wandered about disconsolately, idly throwing grains of corn to a regiment of clucking hens that were following close to his heels, and which he scared away by

charging on them suddenly with outspread arms ; but even this diversion grew flat and unprofitable after the third or fourth repetition. The day dragged on to a close, but ended cheerily enough, with Emeline knitting a pair of mittens for him by the light of the hanging lamp, requiring frequent measurements and much discussion as to their shape and style.

But the next day was just as tiresome. He missed Joshua sadly, and, to make matters worse, Rover had been taken to assist Joshua with the sheep, and this left him no playfellow but the kittens. He helped Emeline churn, and aided her manfully in all her little tasks about the house, but his conversation turned continually on Joshua. He wondered how many sheep he had bought, and if he had secured any lambs, and, if so, how could they

make such a long journey on their little legs?

"If I was there," he kept repeating, "I'd help Joshua so that he wouldn't lose no time, and if them little lambs got tired I'd carry 'em part of the way. Me and Joshua can git a lot o' work done when we git at it together."

The third day found him restless and silent. Emeline had promised him a feast of nuts and molasses candy in the evening, and sent him to gather a fresh supply of chestnuts, but it was evident that his mind was not on chestnuts.

His thoughts were now running on something that carried the active little imagination back to the city. Joshua, before starting, had removed a large, old-fashioned silver watch with chain attached, from his waistcoat pocket, and hung it on a nail in

the sitting-room, where it ticked out the minutes just three-quarters of an hour behind time. This watch kept ticking in little James' ear wherever he went, and he longed to take it down and examine it. It ticked on just as loudly when he went out to the barn as it did in the sitting-room.

After awhile he concluded that he might just as well take it down, as Emeline was busily engaged in the milk-house. Mounting a chair, he gently lifted the chain from the nail, and held the shining thing in his hand for a second—and the next found it in his pocket. There was no use staying in the house with the watch in his pocket. To examine it thoroughly he would have to go out-of-doors.

Emeline saw him starting out the door with his cap pulled down over his curls

and shading his eyes. She asked where he was going.

"Just to git a few more o' them nuts," he answered carelessly, and edged around the side of the house—then across the road, over the fence, and through the fields. He reached the woods and sat down on the fallen trunk of a tree, where he reflected on the strange fact that the watch was not in pawn.

"Why doesn't Joshua hock it?" queried little James impatiently.

After awhile he became convinced that Joshua didn't hock it because he didn't know how. Your Little Brother turned it over in his hands meditatively.

"I could buy him something nice if I'd hock it—a pair of driving gloves; he'd like them better than the watch. He doesn't care for the watch."

"Yes; I *must* hock it," whispered little James, slipping the watch gently into his pocket.

"Joshua wants his driving gloves. It's not a good watch. Joshua says it doesn't keep good time." This was indeed very true, but it was quite as correct as most country time-pieces, which are not expected to do more than suggest remotely the time of day. When Joshua was out in the field, he looked always at the sun instead of his watch, as it was not only more correct, but vastly more convenient. But he always wore the watch with his Sunday clothes.

James started off slowly in the direction of North Elk Village, but quickened his pace—now taking the road and again the field—when he saw that he was likely to meet some one who might recognize him as "Emeline's boy."

There were but three stores in the village—a drug store that served as a post-office ; a small millinery establishment, and a larger general store, in which a great variety of merchandise was displayed, with a very limited choice of each kind of ware.

Your Little Brother walked up and down the road that served as a main street of the town, finding a fresh cause for embarrassment at every step. He often accompanied Joshua to the village, but never before came alone, and the number of persons who now hailed him with good-natured recognition and inquired after the health of Emeline and Joshua filled him with distress and alarm. With the usual inquisitiveness of country people, they wanted to know why he came alone and on foot, to which your Little Brother replied :

“*She ain’t feelin’ well this mornin’, so I*

come to git somethin' for her," the pronoun, when slightly emphasized, being understood as referring to the mistress of the house.

Finally, after a thoughtful study of the three gayly trimmed hats that adorned the milliner's window, James retraced his steps and entered the general store, where he discovered 'Mr. Marsh, the proprietor, sitting behind the counter engrossed in a newspaper.

The little boy slid forward sideways, relieved to find himself the only customer in the store. He paused in front of Mr. Marsh, who surveyed him good-naturedly over the rim of his spectacles.

"Well, my little man, what can I do for you?" he inquired, with a wintry smile, intended to restore the confidence of a youthful customer in whose pocket a bashful coin was doubtless burning the inevitable hole.

"I got this—what kin yer gimme for it?"

gasped your Little Brother in a husky stage whisper, producing the watch and laying it on the counter. The words came forth glibly enough from long habit, but the painful embarrassment of the moment was new. Never before had he experienced such nervousness ! Mr. Marsh was an elderly man and his hearing was not acute. He failed to catch the meaning of your Little Brother's words, but he looked at the watch and chain with great surprise.

"Why, isn't this Joshua Hillis' watch and ain't you his Boy?" he asked, looking sharply through his spectacles at his small customer.

"Yes, sir," answered James, seized with sudden trembling, and terrified at the prompt recognition of both the watch and himself. "It ain't a-goin' right—Joshua wants to have it fixed so it'll keep good time."

“He didn’t send you down here with it, did he?” questioned the storekeeper, suspiciously. “Joshua knows there ain’t no watchmaker nearer than Millersport.”

“Emeline wants it mended,” answered your Little Brother, his usual inventiveness coming to the rescue. “But I guess she’ll have to wait till he gits home—I’ll tell her,” and he seized the watch and hastily returned it to his pocket. The storekeeper followed the boy to the door.

“You take that watch right back home with you, Boy, do you hear? I’ll stand here, and mind you start right off up that hill.”

Little James was only too thankful to escape from the store without further questioning, and started up the hill road as fast as his legs could carry him. He turned his head occasionally, and saw the figure of the

storekeeper at the door, his hand shading his eyes, which were still following the vanishing form of your guilty Little Brother. This sight caused more dismay and terror to the small fugitive than a whole regiment of policemen. He traveled the homeward road breathlessly, feeling as if the entire village were following him with angry, piercing eyes, demanding the return of the watch to its rightful owner.

"I didn't mean no harm," muttered the child. "'They don't know nothin' 'bout hockin' up here. 'They thinks I meant to steal Joshua's watch. I wouldn't steal nothin' of Joshua's, he's too good to me. I only meant to hock it."

It was quite late in the afternoon when he reached the foot of the steep hill on which lay the Hillis farm. He stopped at a little wooden bridge, made of beams and planks,

through which the rushing water could be seen below. He stood gazing absently for a few minutes into a whirling eddy, which he imagined might conceal the much prized and talked-of trout of those mountain streams, when his ear caught the distant bleat of a lamb in distress. The pitiful wail was repeated again, and he could not fail to note the direction from which it came.

He sprang over the fence and followed the cry some distance through the stony field. There were no sheep in this field, but the bleating became every moment more distinct to his ear. At last he discerned a thin, forlorn, little lamb securely fastened between the barbed wires of a low fence, and making frantic efforts to escape.

Your Little Brother's heart beat quickly with indignation and pity, as he hastened to release the frightened animal. He dis-

covered that it was badly cut and bleeding about the neck, and that its front right leg was lacerated and swollen so that it could not walk.

"It's that mean old Slocum," he muttered, angrily, "puttin' up his wire-fence to hurt Joshua's lambs! Joshua wouldn't have no such fence on his farm." He bound up the wounded leg with his handkerchief, lifted the frightened creature in his arms, and started up the hillside toward the pasture in which Joshua's flock of sheep was grazing.

"If Joshua could see it, he'd have it indoors, and me and Emeline feedin' it on bread and milk till it got well," he thought, as he sat down with the lamb in his arms beside the stone fence that outlined the pasture on the hill-top.

The thought of the watch in his pocket

stole over him just then with acute dismay. He was both hungry and cold, as he had eaten nothing since breakfast, and the chilly October air of the mountains made him shiver and long for the firelight and comfort of the Hillis kitchen, but it was impossible to return to the house. His only hope of shelter for the night was to steal inside the barn after milking, and after all the chores had been completed by the faithful Emeline, and there he might rest with the lamb in his arms until morning. After that he would go away—he did not know where—but go he must beyond all possibility of discovery by those whom he had robbed.

He hugged the lamb close to his heart, and the tears stole down his cheeks. Never more would he sleep in that little white bed with the picture of the devout Samuel greeting his eyes at daybreak!

CHAPTER V.

SUDDENLY, a familiar sound broke on his ear. It was the bark of the impetuous and over-zealous Rover, doubtless engaged in driving the cows homeward for milking. Then Joshua must be home! If he could only explain that he had not meant to steal the watch, but to exchange it for driving gloves!


To face Joshua then, however, was a physical and moral impossibility. It was now almost dark, and he could still hear Rover's barking which seemed to be coming nearer.

The dog suddenly bounded forward and sprang joyfully upon little James, who shook him off desperately, clinging with

all his might to the struggling lamb. Rover turned and barked with fresh zeal, and James beheld a moving light in the distance. It was the gleam of Joshua's lantern, and he was rapidly ascending the hill. Rover continued to bark, and your Little Brother laid himself on the ground, and hugged the lamb to his breast. Joshua came forward and turned the glare of the lantern on the prostrate figure.

"You ain't to stay out here in the cold, Jamie. What's this you've got?"

"It's a lamb that's hurt," murmured your Little Brother, holding up the wounded animal. Joshua took it in his strong arms and carried it gently down the hill. James took the lantern, and without any further explanation they went together to the house, from which a bright light was now streaming. Emeline opened the door with



an exclamation of relief, and the boy entered the kitchen, and sat down on a stool near the stove.

Joshua meanwhile took the wounded lamb to the barn, where the mother was bewailing its loss. It belonged to the number he had just purchased, and had strayed from the road as they approached the foot of the hill.

Emeline disappeared into the cupboard, wiping her eyes, and returned with a well-filled plate and a glass of milk, which she laid on the table.

"There's your supper," she said coldly and sadly. "You've no need to go hungry to bed. I want you to sit down and eat your supper, Jamie." Your Little Brother obeyed and drew a chair toward the table, but the food choked him, and he could not eat.

“There’s the molasses candy and the roast chestnuts I promised you this morning. You’re welcome to them, because I said you could have them for helping me churn yesterday ; I don’t make promises to break ’em. Eat your nuts, Jamie.”

Emeline’s fidelity to her promise of nuts and candy, in the face of his misdemeanor, smote him with a still deeper sense of his own unworthiness ; but he merely turned his head away in what seemed to be a stubborn silence.

“I’ve been looking for you all day, Jamie, and Joshua, he’s been doing the same since he got back with the sheep. It was good of you to take up the poor little lamb. I always said you had a good heart ; but why didn’t you think of us, who was beginning to love you as our own child, and me not able to bear you out of my

sight unless you happen to be with Joshua? How could you disgrace us so? To think that we should harbor a little boy who'd act the part of a thief!" Emeline's voice broke, and she stopped for breath.

Little James sat speechless and choking with unfamiliar and inexpressible emotions. Not the prison cell, nor the penal discipline of the reformatory, nor any of the well-meant efforts of Sunday-school teachers and philanthropists had ever caused the strange, passionate anguish which now filled that little breast. His eyes were burning, and his ears ringing.

He rose from the table, and groped for his hat, which was hanging on a peg within reach, and Emeline heard him say, between heavy sobs:

"I ain't like you-uns; I'm going back to the city to find my mother. I tell yer—

I ain't like you-uns," and he struggled to free himself from the sudden clasp of her arms. Emeline drew him gently to a large arm-chair, in which she seated herself while she held him close with an encircling arm—he was not hard to hold, for after all, he was but a little child of nine.

"We'd begun to love you as if you was our own little boy," she whispered. "You didn't mean to rob us, did you? Where did you leave the watch? Tell me before Joshua comes in."

"It's here," returned the child, drawing it out of his pocket and laying it in her lap. "It ain't hurt any. Will Joshua send me away when he comes in? You tell him I was only goin' to hock it," and laying his head in Emeline's lap, he shut his eyes in shame and dread of facing Joshua, and continued to cry silently.

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Poor Emeline looked pale and exhausted when Joshua returned from the barn. She restored the watch to its place on the wall, and called Joshua's attention to it, and to James' explanation, which remained forever mysteriously unintelligible to both of them. He made no comment but sat down before the stove to warm his hands and feet.

"He ain't touched his supper, Emmy," said Joshua, after a silence of a few minutes, during which he had stared at the child and then at the table. "He'd better eat, for it's after his bedtime."

Thus encouraged, James sat down timidly and dutifully, and ate what he could of the bread and milk, which no longer choked him. Every now and then he looked up shyly at Joshua, who surveyed him with an air of great perplexity.

"I presume he's sorry for what he's

done, Joshua," said Emeline, gently, "and he wants you to forgive him."

"I don't bear any malice so far as the watch is concerned," began Joshua slowly ; "but I'm thinking, Emeline, that maybe we'd better not talk any more about this matter to-night. The child's tired out, and so are you. We can think it over to-morrow, and if James's a mind to stay with us, he'll agree never to do an action of this kind again. The watch is back in its place, and our boy is back with us, and we're glad it's no worse. I presume he'd better be getting to bed now. I'll see him undressed, Emmy, while you clear away the dishes."

He took a small lamp from the mantel and lighted it, while your Little Brother gazed at him with his soul in his eyes. Never was there a man as strong and as gentle as Joshua !

In a very few minutes he was snugly tucked in his little feather-bed, and Joshua heard him say the prayer that Emeline had taught him. When he had finished, with his hand on Joshua's arm, he said :

“Do you know what makes me so bad, Joshua?” He paused and looked anxiously into the face of his care-taker. “You won't like me no more, Joshua, when I'm done tellin' you this; but I ain't goin' to keep nothin' back from you-uns. I ain't got no father like other boys; I ain't had nothin' but a mother all along. I can't never be good nor go to Heaven like other boys, because—*of her*”—his voice sank to a whisper and Joshua had to bend his head still lower—“The boys in the Reform School (where I got put, you know, Joshua, for running away) they said it's in the Bible that boys *what has mothers like her* can't

never be saved nor inherit the kingdom of Heaven—all the boys there say so. There's more there like me, and the Bible says they can't never inherit the kingdom of Heaven. Did you-uns know I was that kind of a boy?"

The little white-robed figure sat with head bowed and hands clasped, as if cowering beneath the mantle of parental shame; but an angel carved in marble, and shedding marble tears over a fallen world, would not have seemed more radiantly pure than did your Little Brother at that moment to Joshua. To his deep and tender nature, the Divine compassion once so freely bestowed on an erring woman could do no less than illumine the brow of her forsaken child with a tragic, holy innocence.

But in this heart-breaking acceptance on the part of your Little Brother of eternal

condemnation for sins not his own, Joshua read an explanation of the child's mysteriously complex nature—and surely that blighting consciousness of evil might be removed ere it did further damage !

He laid his large hand gently on the boy's forehead.

“ Probably, your beginning in life ain't been as regular as we'd like to have it—not the same as if you'd belonged always to Emeline and me, which is what we would have chosen if we'd been consulted—but it is just as true as Gospel, Jamie, that the Lord made you and sent you to us to take the place of him we lost. There ain't any use going back of that, and I don't allow as you have any right to ask for more than one pair of parents, which is all the law requires, and that's Emeline and me. Why, if you had another father and mother to claim you,

where'd we come in? We want you for our own boy, and we ain't goin' shares with any one, not if you turned out to be the President's son. The Lord gave you to us, and He told Emeline and me to be father and mother to you, and we're going to have you all to ourselves, and give you our own name, and have you baptized in the church yonder."

"Will it be just the same as if I was your own boy, Joshua? Just exactly the same?" asked your Little Brother, looking up with shining eyes.

"Just the same, exactly," repeated Joshua, firmly; "there ain't any particle of difference."

"Then maybe I *kin* git to Heaven—do you think that, too, Joshua?"

"If you love and fear God, and mind what the Good Book says," answered

Joshua, never forgetful of his simple theology; "and there isn't anything in that Book about what you mentioned. Not a word. Emeline and me read our Bible every night and we know chapters of it by heart, so don't you tell that to anybody again—not even to Emeline—for it ain't true. It's just a story got up to scare little boys, and there ain't any use repeatin' it, for it might scare some folks as is old enough to know better. Some women-folks is narvous-like over stories, and kinder dreams they're true. It makes them uncomfortable to hear such tales, so don't you be repeatin' it anywhere. There's free grace for all, Jamie, if we love God and serve Him. You've heard the minister say that Sundays. I presume you're goin' to get grace some day, and be like the rest of us folks who's trying to follow the heavenly way? You ain't too

young to come out in Meetin', Jamie—not a bit—and it would please Emeline wonderful to see you rise up and speak out firm for the Lord some day. Then you'll be our little boy always, who'll never lie nor steal, nor swear, won't you?"

Little James nodded for answer, and his face became radiant and then thoughtful as he raised his eyes to Joshua's.

"But I kin have a new necktie, Joshua, when I come out before the Meetin', just for that Sunday, Joshua? And one o' them white shirts with collars to 'em, all done up stiff?"

Joshua covered him up in bed and tucked the heavy quilts in closely.

"I presume Emeline'll see that your clothes is all right and proper, Jamie, on that occasion. You're awful hard on your clothes, and we've bought you a sight o'

neckties already, but I presume we ain't goin' to see you lookin' shabby *that* Sunday, but you must put your mind on some things above neckties, and mind what the minister says."

"That's what I'll do," replied James, nodding with gravity. "I know I ain't to think of my clothes when I'm gettin' grace, but I want to look nice and as if I belonged to you-uns—I won't swear, nor steal, nor tell lies, nor do nothin' wrong, Joshua, after this—I've most forgot all them bad words a'ready that I used to know. *She* taught them to me, 'cause she said 'em herself. She hadn't ought to act so, had she, when I was her only little boy? She won't go to Heaven, will she, Joshua? I presume they won't want her there. I presume she can't git there, 'cause she don't know nothin' about grace, and I hope nobody won't tell her, don't you, Joshua?"

"That ain't a Christian spirit to show to your poor mother," said Joshua, reprovingly.

"If you get grace you must pray for all poor souls that has missed the light, and your mother first of all."

"Maybe she's dead now, anyways," answered little James, hopefully. "I ain't heerd tell of her for many a day afore I come here. She can't git grace after she's dead, can she, Joshua? I'll pray for her if you say so, but I don't think prayin' 'll do *her* any good. She's awful bad, Joshua."

"With God all things is possible, Jamie; you leave her sins to God, and say your prayers for her nights, and tell Him that you forgive her as you hope to be forgiven."

"I'll forgive her and I'll pray for her nights, Joshua, but I don't want to see her ag'in—never—not even up in Heaven."

"When she gets there she'll be changed,

I presume," said Joshua softly, "and she'll wear a crown o' glory, and be beautiful and bright, and you won't be ashamed to meet her up there, where all sins is forgiven and all sorrow is wiped away. Good-night, Jamie."

He took the lamp and made his way down the narrow staircase, leaving your Little Brother to dream of neckties, grace and forgiveness of sins, all mingled together in a new and beautiful theology, in which the face of Joshua, tender and glorified, shone upon him as the face of his Father in Heaven, and brought peace and joy and comfort to his little heart, whenever he awoke in the night to whisper a prayer of forgiveness for the sins of his poor mother.

CHAPTER VI.

JAMES started to school on the following Monday, an escort being secured for him in the person of Miss Cora Slocum, a trim, rosy-cheeked country maiden of fourteen, who attended the same school, and obligingly stopped every morning at the Hillis farm-house for her little comrade. They carried their dinners in little tin pails, and did not return until nearly five o'clock in the afternoon.

Your Little Brother was greatly pleased by the informality of this district school. The best behaved boy of the day before was chosen by the teacher to assist in making the fire in the huge stove that stood in the middle of the room, and this

was the first "exercise" of the morning. There were many other little errands later in the day, such as going to the spring at the foot of the hill for water, bringing in wood and sweeping up the room, all of which served to break the monotony of school life to restless children.

He attended regularly, and the lonely country roads gave him no invitation to linger by the way. The objective point to be reached was the school-house, where the rivalry of competing scholars stood out in sharp contrast to the dullness of life outside.

When the first payment in the form of a check was received from the society, Emeline studied it with a thoughtful brow.

"If this had come right after the first two weeks," she remarked to Joshua, "I'd said it was the hardest earned money we'd

ever received. It seems as if it was poor pay for such a heap of tears and heart-breakings as we've been through."

"No money can pay us for all that," replied Joshua, "but if we hadn't felt obligated to keep on and do our best by the thought that we was taking pay for it, I don't know, Emeline, as either you or me would have had the grit to hold on to that child week after week until he come through."

"That's true," agreed Emeline; "I presume we'd have felt as if all the years to come was pressing upon us to make up our minds to once whether we'd have him or no, but the pay comin' regular was something to wait for and seemed to take part of the burden off us."

"And now he's gettin' to be that good and steady," continued Joshua; "I don't

know how many has asked me to send in their names to the society—to get just such a boy as him—that’s what they all say.”

“We’ll have to be keeferful who we recommend,” observed Emeline anxiously. “There’s many as wants children as hadn’t ought to have them.”

Joshua frequently received printed blanks from the society, inquiring into the morals and circumstances of his neighbors, and they filled them out together in the evenings, conscientiously and seriously; but the arrival of a printed form asking information of Mr. Slocum’s family, caused the Hillis household great embarrassment.

“He spoke such a good word for us,” said Emeline; “it seems as if we ought to do him a good turn now we’ve the chance.”

“These questions is so pointed and plain,

Emeline. '*Do they live peaceably and happily together?*' We know they don't. She's a-grumblin' from morning till night, and Slocum often goes a week without speaking to her. 'Tis no place for a child."

Joshua sighed deeply, and finally they agreed to say that Mr. Slocum was a good neighbor, but his wife was not just the best person to bring up a child. None came, however, to the Slocum mansion.

The first snow fell early in December, and the rolling hills seemed lonely, remote, and holy in their white silence. A second, and then a third snowfall left no trace of naked ground visible. Even the roads were obliterated, and the stone fences became tiny ridges in a vast white plain. Neighbor was cut off from neighbor, until all united in a spontaneous effort to break a road

through that would open the way to school, church, mill, and village, and great was the merriment and excitement over the enterprise. School was suspended for three days, the school-house having to be dug out of a snowbank, to the hilarity of the assembled scholars. Little James, in heavy rubber boots, overcoat, and woolen muffler, assisted in the excavation with a tiny shovel of his own, and carted away small hillocks of snow on a home-made sled that Joshua had given him.

The next absorbing topic of that winter was Brother Barnwell's success in holding revival meetings in the old Stony Creek Church. Every Sunday brought a fresh convert into the fold until but few of the unregenerate remained in the township ; and it was generally agreed that these stiff-necked sinners represented the lowest social strata of the

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community. It was said they comprised chiefly the Van Sliver and McDooney families, who had intermarried, and were a miserable, degraded set, living in rude shanties on rented land, which they were too lazy to till, and which, accordingly, yielded them nothing but stones and weeds. The men spent half their time in jail, and their families moved in and out of the county almshouse with the approach of winter and the return of spring. They married always in haste, but failed to repent at leisure, taking to themselves other mates often without the sanction of a marriage tie ; hence they were all spoken of promiscuously as the "Sliver-McDooney tribe," and every one in the county knew the disgrace of bearing either name.

In that remote and distinctly rural neighborhood—where the stage brought the mail

once a day, and the nearest railroad station was fourteen miles off—the country church stood as the great social centre of country life. It took the place of the club, the music-hall and the circulating library of the city. It provided all the lectures, concerts, picnics, and other excitements of the year, and lent the only books that were to be found within a radius of fifty miles or more.

Those who chose, therefore, to remain outside of its influence lost much that was valuable in the higher social and educational life of the community. For there were no mission churches on those hills. The Van Slivers and McDooneys were invited to share the cushioned seat of the prosperous elect. No low down sinner was set apart to worship God on a harder bench than his wealthy neighbor sat upon, nor were his

children urged to attend a "Ragged Sunday school."

But the logic that was born of the plow and the hay-field—in close observance of Nature's fulfillment of promise—looked with a very critical eye on conduct as the supreme test of an honest belief. Little children might "experience" religion as well as grown people, but they were welcomed into the fold to become good children, and not impossible little saints.

Enfolded in the heart of such a community as this, it was not strange that little James listened with deep interest to the conversation of his elders on the latest revival news, and shared their enthusiasm over each new convert. Eager always to do what he saw others doing, he besought them every Sunday to allow him "to come forward," but Emeline and Joshua conferred with the

minister, who urged caution, and said that one backslider could do more harm in a week than fifty of the faithful could undo in a lifetime ; and that there was nothing to prevent little James from growing in grace every day, until the Spirit was ready to bring him all fully prepared to the foot of the throne. It was evident that grace *was* growing in him, and also a great impatience to have the ceremony over, and himself admitted to that select circle of the faithful, from which the Van Slivers and McDooneys were unavoidably excluded, by reason of their short-sighted, perverse, and degenerate ways.

From the great moral height of six months' familiarity with decent living, little James looked with disdain on the obliquities of this class, and strove in every way possible to identify himself with that type

of country life of which Joshua and Emeline were shining examples.

He adorned his conversation as they did with quaint expressions that were supposed to lend dignity to the speaker, and marked him as apart from those who preferred to be less choice in their polysyllables. He understood it was more becoming to say "I presume so" than "I guess so," and to say "probably" slowly, distinctly, and with great solemnity, was an artistic achievement.

But with all the proprieties of speech and conduct carefully observed, he felt himself still an alien, unless permitted to experience that mysterious, stimulating consciousness known as conversion.

I will not say that he had even a child's ordinary comprehension of the great spiritual formulas he was so ready to accept. He

knew, indeed, that he was expected to be a good boy, and with blissful confidence in Joshua's assumption of parental relationship, he beheld a luminous, new, and tenderly literal meaning in the statement that he was to be "born again." No theological argument was needed to explain away the dogma that had once appeared as a stumbling block to the earliest convert in history. He was very glad to be born again, and it seemed the simplest and most delightful fact in the whole scheme of salvation that he could be born again, and choose Joshua and Emeline for his parents !

There was, therefore, no prouder moment in your Little Brother's life than when he stood up one evening, in the dimly-lighted little Church, by the side of Emeline and Joshua, and in the presence of all the congregation, made his first confession of faith.

The great occasion was worthy of the new Sunday suit, the gay silk necktie, and stiff, white collar, that elevated and pricked his chin without a suggestion of annoyance—so inspiring and satisfactory was it to be well-dressed, and to do the correct thing in the eyes of the whole congregation! All admired his beauty and the unfaltering tones in which he spoke of the soul's deep experiences, and of his longing to be "born again," and to enter into the kingdom of the elect.

There was no one present to contrast this scene with a former one in his career, when he stood forth in the presence of many, and made his public confession of crime. Perhaps he understood the meaning of one about as well as he did the meaning of the other. Each was the inevitable result of an all-powerful environment, in which a very

human and child-like love of approbation had become the only native force that could be counted on to turn the scales of good and evil either way.

The choir sang an appropriate hymn, in which all the congregation joined, but in the hearts of Emeline and Joshua, the song of Isaiah was heard above the music of the choir :

“ For unto us a Child is born ;
Unto us a Son is given :
And His name shall be called Wonderful.”

So the sheath of the criminal withered and fell away, and the face of the Child appeared, turning heavenward like an opening flower. The little Offended One raised his eyes toward those who had wrought this miracle, and answered their looks of love with that smile of happiness that remembers not past sorrow.

132 *Your Little Brother James.*

And thus the restoration of your Little Brother was complete.

THE END.



